

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 303073
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PAGE 02 STATE 303073

SUBJECT: S/EC PRESIDENCY DIALOGUE: DECEMBER 15-16

POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING

REF: THE HAGUE 6840

1. IN CONNECTION WITH DECEMBER 15-16 POLITICAL DIRECTORS MEETING IN THE HAGUE, EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO CONSULT WITH THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY ON FOLLOWING TOPICS.

2. PORTUGAL. THE US IS CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF CONDUCTING INITIAL CONSULTATIONS ESPECIALLY WITH THE U.S. CONGRESS ON THE ELEMENTS OF A BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR PORTUGAL. THE US ALSO ANTICIPATES HOLDING DISCUSSIONS SHORTLY WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON RESPONSES TO THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WHICH PORTUGAL FACES.

WHILE THE RESULTS OF THE DECEMBER 12-13 LOCAL ELECTIONS DO NOT SIGNAL ANY MAJOR SHIFTS IN THE PORTUGUESE POLITICAL EQUATION, PRIME MINISTER SOARES CONTINUES TO CONFRONT A DELICATE POLITICAL AND SERIOUS ECONOMIC SITUATION. THE US BELIEVES THE GOP REQUIRES MANIFEST POLITICAL SUPPORT AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM ITS WESTERN NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS, AS MUCH SO NOW AS IN THE PAST. IN THIS CONNECTION, PORTUGAL'S "EUROPEAN OPTION" REMAINS A PILLAR OF SOARES' POLICY, ONE WHICH IS SEEN AS A GUARANTEE OF PORTUGUESE DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WHILE WE NAGAVD THE QUESTION OF EC MEMBERSHIP AS A MATTER FOR THE COMMUNITY AND PORTUGAL TO DETERMINE, THE US WELCOMES CLOSER TIES BETWEEN THE EC AND PORTUGAL AS CONTRIBUTING TO THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRATIC FORCES IN PORTUGAL AND TO OVERALL POLITICAL STABILITY IN SOUTHERN EUROPE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE NINE HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO COORDINATE THEIR RESPONSES TO SOARES WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER TOURS CAPITALS IN JANUARY TO EXPLORE THE PROSPECTS FOR PORTUGUESE EC MEMBERSHIP. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT, AS THEY DEVELOP THEIR POSTURE, THE NINE WILL KEEP FIRMLY IN MIND EUROPE'S ACKNOWLEDGED POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD PORTUGAL AND SOARES' NEED TO RETURN TO LISBON WITH EVIDENCE OF CONTINUED EC SUPPORT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 303073

3. CSCE. THE MESHING OF EC NINE CONSULTATIONS ON CSCE WITH THOSE AT NATO IS WORKING WELL. THIS PROCESS SHOULD CONTINUE AS THE BELGRADE FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS DRAW NEARER. THERE APPEARS TO BE A GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG THE NINE AND AT NATO THAT THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION IS OUR PRIMARY GOAL, AND THAT WE SHOULD FORMULATE A LIMITED NUMBER OF NEW PROPOSALS TO KEEP THE WESTERN INITIATIVE AT

BELGRADE. IN THE COMING MONTHS WE WILL NEED IN OUR CONSULTATIONS TO GET DOWN TO DETAILED PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS.

4. UNGA ISSUES. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO EXPRESS OUR GRATIFICATION OVER THE CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION WE HAVE HAD DURING THE 31ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH THE NINE. AS THE SESSION IS NEARLY OVER AND MOST ISSUES HAVE NOW BEEN DEALT WITH IN COMMITTEE AND ONLY AWAIT FORMAL CONSIDERATION IN PLENARY, WE HAVE NO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES TO RAISE. HOWEVER, WE LOOK FORWARD EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR TO REVIEWING WITH THE NINE THE EVENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ASSESSING THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR FUTURE ACTION.

5. GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US THUS FAR ON THE DECEMBER 11 MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS BITSIOS AND CAGLAYANGIL IN BRUSSELS SUGGESTS THAT THEY CONCENTRATED ON THE AEGEAN AIR SPACE QUESTIONS. THEY APPARENTLY REVIEWED THE PARIS DISCUSSIONS AND NOTED POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT WHICH INCLUDE A) THE LOCATION OF THE WESTERN BORDER OF A SENSITIVE ZONE TO STRADDLE THE FIR LINE WITHIN WHICH EACH SIDE WOULD EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON MILITARY FLIGHTS; AND B) THE GREEK DESIRE AND TURKISH REFUSAL TO INCLUDE LANGUAGE IN ANY AIR SPACE AGREEMENT WHICH PRESERVES THEIR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL AND LEGAL POSITIONS. BITSIOS AND CAGLAYANGIL APPARENTLY AGREED ON PROCEDURES FOR EXCHANGING DRAFT TEXTS THROUGH THEIR EMBASSIES IN ANKARA AND ATHENS PRIOR TO A FINAL SESSION BETWEEN THE PARIS NEGOTIATORS. NO DATE WAS SET FOR SUCH A MEETING. WE GATHER THAT THERE IS STILL SOME HOPE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MIGHT BE ABLE TO SIGN AN AIR SPACE AGREEMENT IN FEBRUARY WHEN THEY MEET IN STRASBOURG AT A COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 303073

BITSIOS AND CAGLAYANGIL ALSO REVIEWED THE BERN TALKS ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND AGREED THE NEXT ROUND SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN LATE JANUARY. OTHER GREEK/TURKISH ISSUES, INCLUDING CYPRUS, WERE APPARENTLY BRIEFLY AND INCONCLUSIVELY REVIEWED.

OUR OVERALL PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT DECEMBER 11 MEETING NEITHER LED TO ANY SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH NOR DID IT INTRODUCE NEW OBSTACLES TO FURTHER PROCESS OF DIALOGUE ON AEGEAN AND OTHER ISSUES. EXPECTATIONS WERE APPARENTLY NOT HIGH FOR THIS ROUND OF LONG SERIES OF BITSIOS/CAGLAYANGIL MEETINGS. WE WOULD WELCOME INFORMATION-ASSESSMENT FROM THE NINE.

6. DUTCH PRESIDENCY. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO CONVEY TO RUTTEN OUR APPRECIATION FOR HIS PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION, AND THAT OF THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY IN GENERAL, TO THE US/EC NINE POLITICAL DIALOGUE. OUR EXCHANGES OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS HAVE COVERED THE SPECTRUM OF COMMON FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS, AND WE WOULD LIKE THE DUTCH TO KNOW THAT WE VALUE HIGHLY THEIR COOPERATIVE AND SKILLFUL MANAGEMENT OF THIS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT CHANNEL OF CONSULTATION. KISSINGER

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